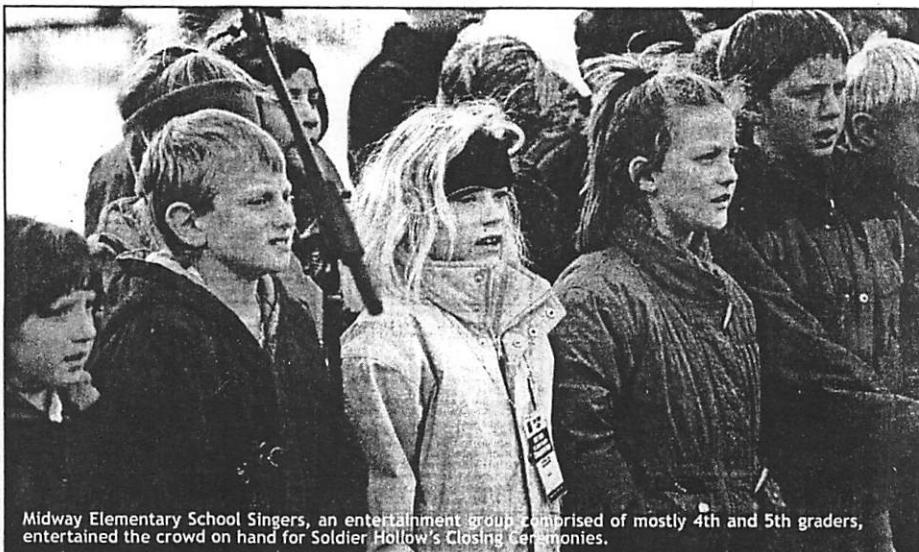


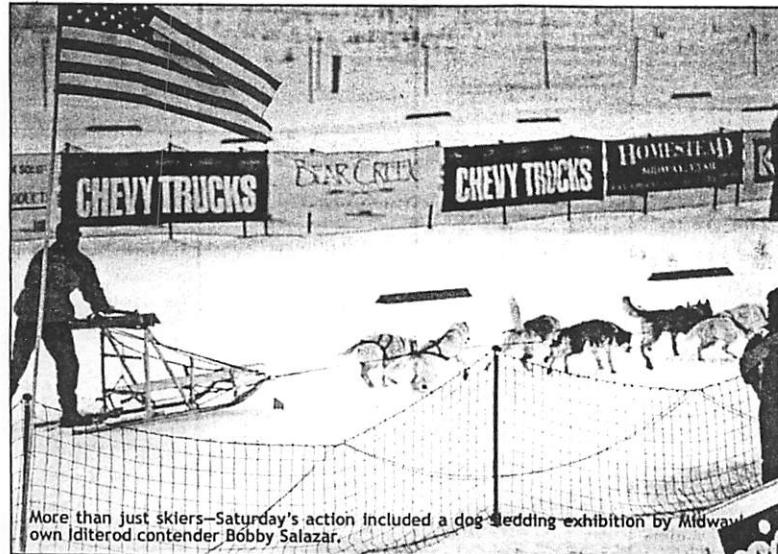
Finale To Wasatch's Olympic Beginning

Soldier Hollow wraps up first national event with a huge party Jean Croasmun, Courier staff

SLOC's John Allberg shakes the hand of one of the many people who were instrumental in turning Soldier Hollow into a world-class venue.



Midway Elementary School Singers, an entertainment group comprised of mostly 4th and 5th graders, entertained the crowd on hand for Soldier Hollow's Closing Ceremonies.



More than just skiers—Saturday's action included a dog-sledding exhibition by Midway's own Iditarod contender Bobby Salazar.

On the heels of the highest profile national competition to hit Wasatch County, over 1000 spectators filled Soldier Hollow to watch Saturday's Closing Ceremonies of the Chevy Truck Cross-Country Nationals.

The afternoon's festivities started with a bang as a team of skydivers from Skydive Salt Lake leapt from "a scary airplane," according to Steve Oxborrow, one of the jumpers, landing in the cross-country venue.

Jim Carroll, organizer of the skydiving team Salt Lake #2 and a Midway resident, said his team, including one former flying Elvis, were pleased with the day, noting good, although cloudy conditions. "It's a lot safer than skiing," said Carroll.

Other spectators and competitors had equally positive comments.

"The trails are hard and in good condition," said one of Saturday's competitors, Xan Courville of Sun Valley, Idaho. "It's the hardest course I've ever skied on," she said.

During a speech to the audience, Salt Lake Organizing Committee (SLOC) member, John Allberg, instrumental in creating the Soldier Hollow venue, noted that the Nationals were, "The culmination of two-and-a-half years of transforming a cow pasture."

Other Olympic representatives on hand included SLOC president, Mitt Romney, members of the Wasatch County Olympic effort, and the SLOC retail trailer, selling t-shirts, sweat-shirts, hats and pins. **24**

Midway's David Whittaker grabs a bunch of balloons and tosses them into the air, marking the end of the festivities at Soldier Hollow.



Saturday was Danny Castellanos of Heber's first time to watch the action at Soldier Hollow. He'll be back.